

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE A-1

NEW YORK TIMES
23 FEBRUARY 1979

A New Wave of Early Retirements And Resignations Jolts the C.I.A.

By SEYMOUR M. HERSH

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Feb. 22 — Another wave of resignations and early retirements has struck the Central Intelligence Agency, officials said today, amid renewed reports that morale there had plummeted.

Intelligence officials acknowledged in interviews that as many as 200 middle- and senior-level management officials, including some regarded as the most admired professionals in the agency, chose to resign last month so as to obtain maximum benefits under an early retirement plan.

New Impact on Morale Seen

The C.I.A. officials, while acknowledging that the number of retirements was higher than usual, sought to minimize their significance. One official suggested that the turnover amounted to "sort of the end of a generation here."

But past and present agency employees characterized the retirements as another sign that morale inside the agency remained in decline. One well-informed official cited the case of a widely respected official, Vincent Heyman, who retired last month as director of the C.I.A.'s operations center to take up a position with the Defense Intelligence Agency, nominally one of the C.I.A.'s chief competitors in the bureaucracy of Washington.

Adding to the apparent morale problems has been the agency's decision to inspect the briefcases and purses of employees leaving the headquarters building in suburban Virginia, as well as a recent wave of employee lie-detector tests aimed at seeking out alleged security violators. More than 15 employees have been dismissed or faced sanctions in the last year as a result of those tests, agency officials said.

The searches were begun late last fall. Last November, a former C.I.A. employee, was convicted of stealing a classified document from agency files and selling it to a Soviet official. There were reports also that other documents were missing from C.I.A. headquarters.

The new retirements became known at a time when many officials in Washing-

ton have begun to speculate that President Carter has become disenchanted with Adm. Stansfield Turner, the Director of Central Intelligence, who recently was criticized for his agency's failure to predict the successful revolution in Iran.

Some officials, whose information about intelligence matters has been reliable in the past, have been saying in recent weeks that James R. Schlesinger, now Secretary of Energy, is known to be eager to return to a national security post in the Government. Mr. Schlesinger served as Secretary of Defense and Director of Central Intelligence in previous administrations.

But a high White House aide emphasized in a conversation today that Admiral Turner continued to have President Carter's confidence.

Another official, defending the agency, noted somewhat heatedly that critics were overlooking the stream of reliable information about the current border war between China and Vietnam that the C.I.A. has provided the Administration.

This official went on to dismiss with disdain complaints about Admiral Turner's leadership.

However, others take issue with the defenders. One legislator with direct oversight responsibility for the C.I.A. observed that the agency had lost a number of valuable employees in the current round of resignations and expressed serious concern about the effect on agency.

'Pessimistic Feeling'

In a similar vein, another well-informed official characterized the feeling inside the agency as "very pessimistic."

Last month's retirements, which were voluntary, were the third such large exodus for the C.I.A. in the last six years. In early 1973, Mr. Schlesinger, then Director of Central Intelligence, initiated a layoff and early retirement program that resulted in the elimination of an estimated 2,000 jobs.

In late 1977, Admiral Turner eliminated roughly 800 jobs, many of them through attrition. But other officials were dismissed or ordered to resign.

A C.I.A. official took pains today to differentiate the current retirements from the earlier cutbacks. Despite the retirements last month, he said, the overall retirement total for 1978, including the January numbers, was only about 20 percent higher than the retirement rate for the previous year.

Admiral Turner's critics had previously expressed concern about the new

retirements not only in terms of the number of senior officials who chose to retire, but also because of the high quality of many of those so doing.

Anger and Resentment

In interviews, a number of present and former C.I.A. officials cited with anger and resentment two recent administrative steps, aimed at internal security, undertaken by Admiral Turner.

Roughly 2,000 senior and middle-level agency employees have had to take lie detector tests as part of a stepped-up program to insure that no security violations have taken place, the officials said. A number of employees — fewer than five, officials said — were quietly dismissed after taking the tests, apparently because of serious breaches of security.

At least one C.I.A. man was dismissed after the lie detector tests indicated that he had provided highly classified materials to a member of Congress, officials said. It could not be learned what kind of

offenses were involved in the other dismissals, nor why the agency chose not to file more serious charges in those cases.

In addition, officials said, fewer than 10 C.I.A. employees received administrative reprimands after taking the lie detector tests.

A second irritant cited by former and present employees involved the agency's practice of searching the briefcases and purses of employees leaving after work in an effort to prevent the taking of classified documents for work at home.

Told of those complaints, an agency official said, "You can't have it both ways. You've got guys walking out of here with classified manuals and then we try to polygraph them to stop it — and they complain." The official was referring to the conviction last November of William Kampiles, a former C.I.A. employee, who was convicted of stealing a satellite surveillance manual and selling it to an official of the Soviet Union for \$3,000.

STAT